

City of Bellingham Candidates

Candidate responses
were not edited by
Whatcom Watch.

Candidates were asked
to keep their answers
to 100 words or less.

Candidates reviewed
their answers in the
layout before the paper
was sent to the printer.

Background: The median home value in Bellingham is \$367,300. Bellingham home values have gone up 10.5 percent over the past year. The median list price per square foot in Bellingham is \$232 and the Bellingham Metro average is \$211.

How do you propose to increase affordable housing?

Background: In 1998, Lake Whatcom was listed as an impaired water body for dissolved oxygen and phosphorus under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Nineteen years have elapsed since then and the water quality has further deteriorated as evidenced by the ongoing monitoring studies by the Institute of Watershed Studies at Western Washington University. According to the draft Total Maximum Daily Load study by Paul Pickett and Steve Hood of the Washington State Department of Ecology, a 74 percent reduction in developed watershed land would be required to return Lake Whatcom's phosphorus loadings to natural levels. Lake Whatcom water quality continues to slowly deteriorate.

What actions do you propose to stabilize and even increase the lake's water quality?

Background: The Port of Bellingham Commission acquired the Georgia-Pacific West property at the 1/18/2005 meeting in exchange for the port's agreement to perform specific environmental remediation on the property. The anticipated cleanup costs were estimated at \$20 million. The entire area was tidelands. The city and port signed an agreement for redeveloping the waterfront using the Waterfront District Sub-Area plan. Under the plan, the city agreed to provide infrastructure, parks and public access in the sub zone.

What do you propose to protect the city's investment in that development against the predicted sea level rise that could inundate that area and other low-lying city areas?

Bellingham City Council — At-Large



Eric Bostrom
(360) 255-1192
electericbostrom@gmail.com

Housing in Bellingham is increasingly unaffordable because demand exceeds supply. We need to zone more buildable land for affordable homes. We are not presently in compliance with the Growth Management Act which calls for affordable housing for you and your children.

First, more land needs to be annexed into the city with water and sewer available. Second, build a substantial number of affordable units in the proposed Waterfront District. Third, extend the number of ADUs allowed in neighborhoods, in cases where the neighbors are not adversely affected. Fourth, build smaller homes. Finally, reduce fees in relation to building.

The runoff from the land needs to be managed in such a way that its effect on the lake is the same as if the runoff comes from just the forest. In order to achieve that, I support the following:

- 1) Storage during storms so that infiltration can take place
- 2) Rainwater harvest
- 3) Decreasing impervious surfaces
- 4) Reduce phosphorus concentration in stormwater through treatment and control.

I also support the Lake Whatcom Homeowners Incentives that provides assistance to Lake Whatcom Watershed residents to facilitate water quality landscape improvements. I favor measures that limit aquatic invasive species, pesticides, and bacteria.

First, I would regularly meet with the Port Commissioners to work together with solutions needed for this development.

Second, the floor of the development could be raised to allow for sea rise, before any building takes place.

Third, we could consult Holland. The Dutch have been dealing successfully with flooding solutions and technology for hundreds of years. Half of Holland is either below sea level or very close to sea level. Bellingham is considerably above sea level,

Finally, if necessary, we could build a dike around the Waterfront Development.

Roxanne Murphy

Roxanne Murphy acknowledged receipt of the questions and indicated she would respond if she could find the time.

(360) 647-7699
electroxanne@gmail.com

Bellingham City Council — Ward 2

Gene Knutson

(360) 734-4686
gene_knutson@msn.com

Gene Knutson acknowledged receipt of the questions. When his answers were not received by deadline a follow-up message was left on his answering machine.

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How do you propose to increase affordable housing?

What actions do you propose to stabilize and even increase the lake's water quality?

What do you propose to protect the city's investment in that development against the predicted sea level rise that could inundate that area and other low-lying city areas?

Bellingham City Council — Ward 4



Pinky Vargas

(360) 510-1388
pinky@
votepinkyvargas.com

Affordability and accessibility are a huge challenge; we have a housing crisis, and more people are moving here. We need more options in housing choices and more of them. Like cottage houses, duplexes, ADU/DADU's and more single family homes. It is imperative we find more opportunities for infill by looking for appropriate locations, it's not about forcing neighborhoods into density but providing opportunities to those who can accommodate more infill. In conjunction we need to evaluate what opportunities we have to expand by reviewing our UGA's and moving towards annexation.

It's frustrating that it's currently funded for a 50 year time period. We should be able to make more progress sooner. We need to continue to purchase undeveloped lands in the watershed to stabilize in our sensitive watershed areas. We also need consensus on all the governing bodies for rules and regulations for the entire Lake so everyone is playing by the same rule book including protection on invasive aquatic species.

This is important to consider as we look at our future and the impacts of climate change. All parties included in our Waterfront design want to protect their community and their investments, and so we addressed the environmental factors in The Waterfront District Sub-Area plan. The initial leveling and cleanup process included the height and construction requirements to address the predicted sea level rise.

Bellingham City Council — Ward 6



Michael Lillquist

(360) 920-2684
michaellillquist@
gmail.com

Housing prices have reached record levels across the region, not just in Bellingham. While larger market forces are not under local control, I believe we can identify levers and opportunities to help out. I support the Bellingham Housing Levy, which has created new housing units specifically for youth on the street, homeless veterans, seniors on fixed incomes, women leaving domestic violence, low-income farmer workers, and first-time homebuyers — to name a few recent projects. In addition, I support greater design flexibility to open up opportunities and allow for smaller homes in established neighborhoods, with certain safeguards for current residents.

I have voted and continue to advocate for more funding to reduce polluted runoff of phosphorus-laden water into Lake Whatcom. I see two major fronts. The first is regional stormwater facilities, to hold and treat runoff from entire streets or blocks. Since enactment of a higher Lake surcharge, we have doubled our spending on such projects, and cover hundreds of acres that were untreated before. The other front is personal residential property. Here, I support expanding and strengthening the HIP program to incentivize the removal of harmful landscaping, and replacement with bio-filtrating landscapes and selected native plants.

During the Waterfront process, I amended the environmental regulations to require for better anticipation of sea level rise. The language I introduced requires that any project must use the higher range (not mid range) of predicted sea level rise, based on the anticipated life of a project. For example, our main arterials are considered 100-year facilities, and so the new streets must be planned using the higher range of predicted sea level rise over the next 100 years (5-7 ft). Bear in mind that the Waterfront is on average 15 feet above mean high water, and higher towards downtown.

Quenby Peterson

(360) 306-2321
Q4Bellingham
@gmail.com

Quenby Peterson notified *Whatcom Watch* that she is not actively campaigning or completing questionnaires.